United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ In Presidential statement, Security Council expresses "deep concern" over outbreak of hostilities between Bosnian forces and Bosnian Croat units; strongly condemns new violence and demands immediate end to hostilities.

+ Secretary-General welcomes decision of Palestinians to participate in Middle East peace negotiations resuming in Washington D.C. on 27 April; in separate development, Palestinian Observer says decision by PLO is based on expectation that Israel's attitude would change.

+ UNPROFOR Force Commander says United Nations forces have completed demilitarization of Srebrenica in accordance with 17 April agreement between Serb and Bosnian Presidency forces.

+ Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia, meeting with Secretary-General in Rome, agree to continue efforts to solve question of East Timor at further meeting in New York on 17 September.

+ Effective peace-keeping requires adequate resources and advance planning, Security Council President tells Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.

+ Bulgaria condemns attack on 2 April against UNTAC Military Contingent in Cambodia in which three Bulgarian soldiers were killed and three others seriously wounded.

+ Turkish forces not responsible for the shooting incident of 8 April, at which Greek Cypriot National Guard soldier was killed, says letter transmitted to Secretary-General by Turkish Mission.

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Security Council members have expressed "deep concern" over reports of outbreak of military hostilities between Bosnian governmental forces and

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Bosnian Croat paramilitary units north and west of Sarajevo, and dismay at reports of atrocities and killings carried out in the area.

In a Presidential statement read out this evening by the Council President Jamsheed K.A. Marker of Pakistan, the members of the Council strongly condemned this new outbreak of violence and demanded that both sides cease immediately those hostilities. The Council also called upon all the parties to cooperate with the current efforts undertaken by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia to reach a cease-fire and settle the conflict.

The members of the Council also demanded that the Bosnian Serbs fully implement resolution 819 (1993), including the immediate withdrawal from the areas surrounding Srebrenica, and allow UNPROFOR personnel unimpeded access to the town.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the decision of the Palestinians to participate in the Middle East peace negotiations, which will resume in Washington D.C. on 27 April.

In a statement issued today at Headquarters, the Secretary-General said the decision was "a courageous step" in favour of the peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects, in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

In a related development, Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine, told the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that the decision by the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the talks was based on the expectation that certain promises would be fulfilled and that there would be a change in Israel's attitude.

At its meeting this morning, the Committee also heard a report on the Preparatory Meeting for the Tenth United Nations International NGO meeting on the Question of Palestine and approved the programme for the forthcoming International NGO Meeting, which will be held from 25 to 27 August. The programme for the Seventh United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, to be held on 23 and 24 August, was also approved.

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The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has completed the demilitarization of the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica and has evacuated about 500 sick and wounded from the area, UNPROFOR Force Commander Lars-Eric Wahlgren said today.

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According to a press release issued by UNPROFOR, 170 United Nations troops, civilian police and military observers had been deployed in Srebrenica since the cease-fire agreement took effect on 18 April to collect weapons, ammunitions, mines, explosives and combat supplies. Humanitarian aid convoys had been entering the town since Sunday.

The agreement, mediated by UNPROFOR and signed on 17 April by representatives of the Serb forces and the Bosnian Presidency forces, specified that the demilitarization of Srebrenica be completed within 72 hours and carried out under the control of UNPROFOR.

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Talks on East Timor were held today in Rome under the auspices of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali with the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia. According to a statement issued at Headquarters, the parties discussed, among other things, possible confidence-building measures as a means of fostering an atmosphere in which the substance of the questions can be addressed. The Ministers agreed to meet again on 17 September in New York. Prior to this, talks will be held at Headquarters between representatives of the two Governments.

The talks are part of the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to seek a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement to the question of East Timor.

Following this morning's meetings, the Secretary-General left Rome for Brussels for a three-day official visit to Belgium.

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Since adequate resources and advance planning were needed for the effective implementation of peace-keeping operations, the Security Council hoped that Member States would respond positively to the Secretary-General's plan to institute a system of stand-by forces and to strengthen peace-keeping staff, Council President Jamsheed Marker (Pakistan) said this morning.

In his address to the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, Mr. Marker stressed that fact-finding missions could play an important role in preventive diplomacy by enabling the Secretary-General to meet his responsibilities and the Council to facilitate its deliberations.

A number of representatives called on the United Nations to offer greater support and legitimacy to the peace-keeping efforts of regional organizations. The Russian Federation delegate argued that responsibility for maintaining peace should be decentralized. Since the demand for this type of services far exceeded the United Nations capacities, he said, improved coordination of efforts with regional organizations was required. He noted that in Tajikistan, for instance, the Russian Federation's military contingent had already taken on a peace-keeping role.

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Bulgaria has condemned the attack on 2 April against the Military Contingent of the United Nations Transitional Auhority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in Phum Prek, Kompong Speu Province, in which three Bulgarian soldiers were killed and three others were seriously wounded.

The Bulgarian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the "premeditated and cruel assassination" of members of the Bulgarian contingent was a grave defiance of the human goals of the United Nations peace-keeping operations. However, Bulgaria would continue to contribute further to the "noble tasks" of UNTAC.

The statement was transmitted to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, Slavi Pashovski, in a letter, dated 8 April.
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The Turkish forces are not responsible for the shooting incident on 8 April, at which a Greek Cypriot National Guard soldier was killed, says a letter transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Mission of Turkey.

According to the letter, the "unfortunate incident" occurred when a couple of Greek Cypriot soldiers came within a few meters of a Turkish-manned sentry post "in clear violation of the buffer zone" separating Turkish and Greek Cypriot positions, and despite several warnings not to do so.

The letter went on to say that the incident was immediately "exploited" by the Greek Cypriot side, with further violations of the buffer zone in the ensuing days. Those "provocative" actions "further aggravate the existing lack of trust and confidence between the two sides", said the letter, urging the Greek Cypriot side to "exercise restraint and common sense" and to avoid actions which "adversely affect inter-communal peace and tranquillity".

The letter was signed by Mustafa Kemal Gökeri, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Last week, the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations, A.J. Jacovides, had, in a letter to the Secretary-General, protested the shooting incident.
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